

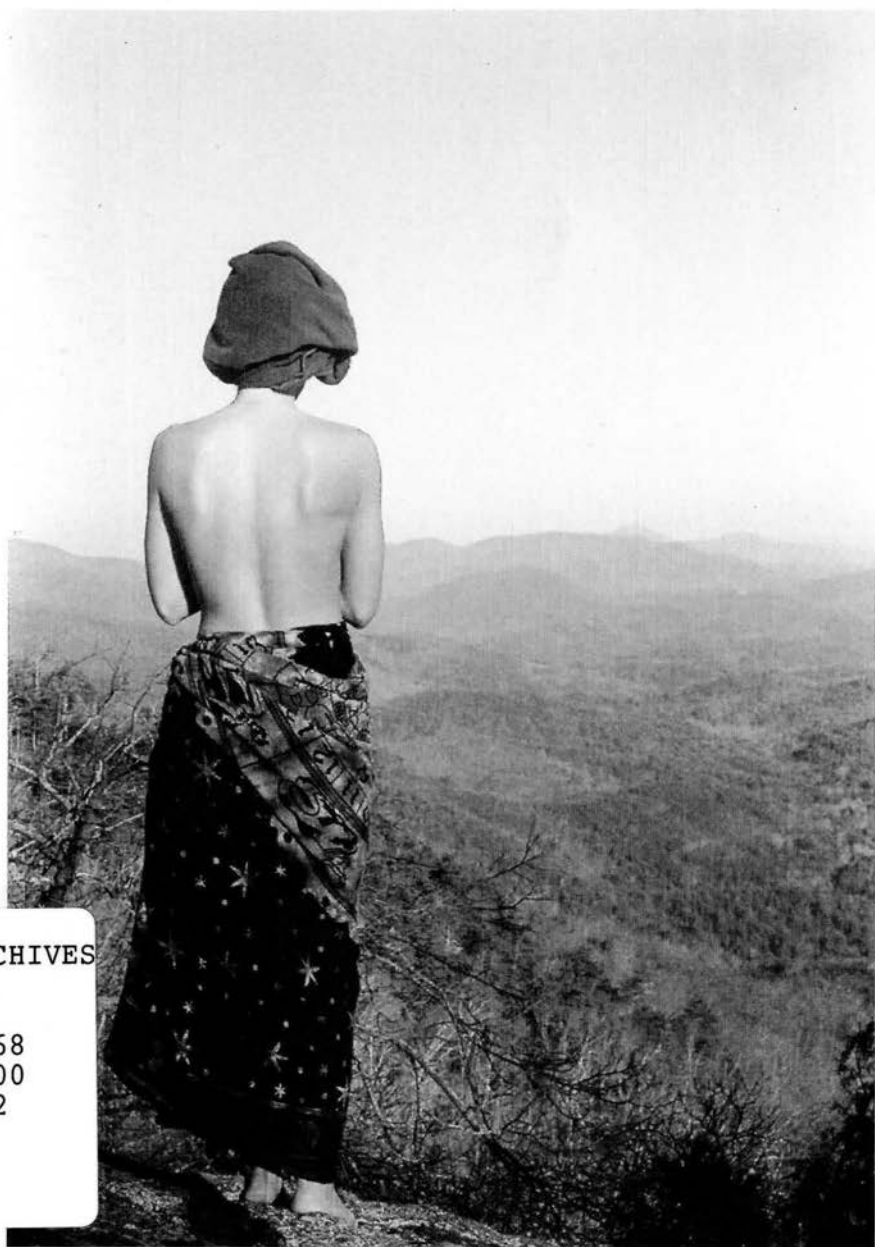
NORTH GEORGIA COLLEGE



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# MountainLaurels



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Mountain Laurels

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## **The Colour of Life**

*Judson Wright*

Yellow is the warmth you feel walking out with the sun beating down on you.

Blue is crashing of the waves over the ocean, the salty scent tingling your nose.

Red is the heat of the flame radiating from the hearth on those cold winter days.

Green is the cool water fusing with the gentle sun, engendering the soft foliage.

Purple is the invigorating scent of a violet, its soft petals on your skin.

Orange is the sweet nectar gliding down your throat after sinking into a tangerine.

Brown is all of nature's gifts mixed together. Shit. That's life.

## *Poetry Second Place*

### **A Cold Cut**

*Fox Gradin*

I spread the mayonnaise.

Yet, the sandwich stands empty.

God bless bologna.

## **But is it Poetry?**

*Judson Wright*

9 men...

...staring at a spot on the floor...

...for an hour and a half...

...only to find out...

...that there is nothing there...

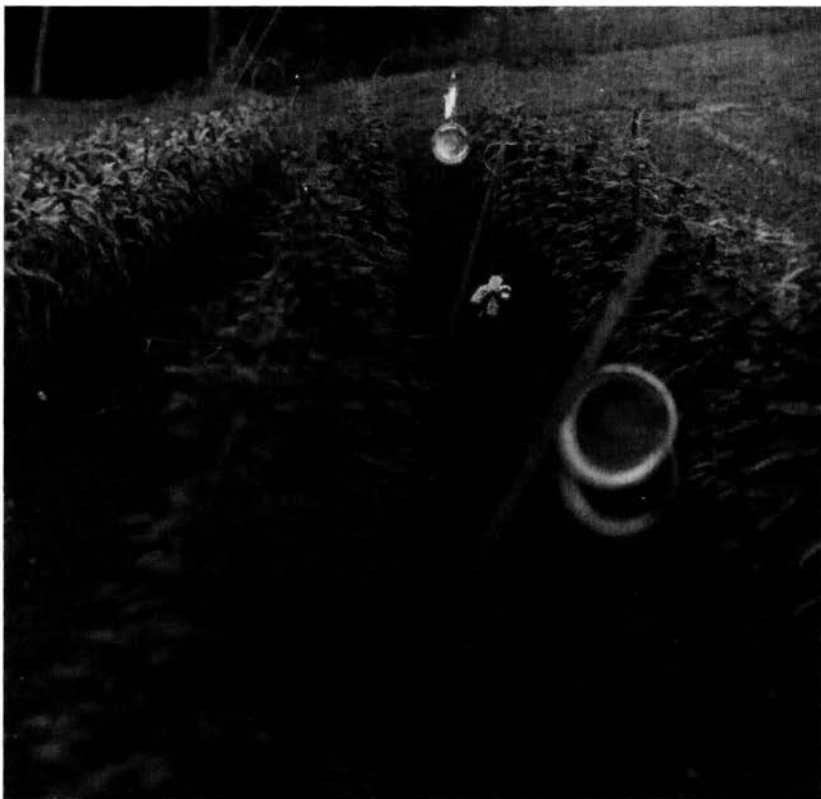
...because...

...the first man stopped to think there...

... and simply forgot to start again.

## **Untitled**

*Adam Nash*



## **The Third Wish**

*Judson Wright*

His eyes slowly regained focus as he covered his eyes from the light of the sun. He stumbled a few steps into the shade of one of the many oaks of the forest. His mind felt as though it had been stung by a wasp. A wasp? Try a whole nest of wasps. As he finally regained his balance, he made an effort to observe his surrounds. "Where am I?" he thought, "Better yet... who am I?"

"What is your third wish?" a cackling voice inquired from behind him.

Startled by the voice, he almost lost his balance again. He jerked around to see a decrepit hag standing in the middle of the path behind him. She was several paces away although he could swear the voice had come from right behind him. "Who... who are you?" he asked.

She let out a wheezing sound that he took to be some kind of sick laugh. "My boy, who I am is not of your concern. What is your third wish?"

"My... my third wish? What happened to the first and second wish?"

Again bellowed that horrible laughing sound. "You have already wished them, my child."

"I have? But why can't I remember them? Why can't I remember anything?"

"Your last wish was to forget."

"Forget? Forget what?"

"Everything."

"But why would I wish that?" His head was spinning; nothing was making any sense. The old hag stared at him. An awkward silence lingered in the air as he awaited an answer. When it became apparent one was not forthcoming, he let out an exasperated sigh. "I'm so confused. I don't even know my own name. None of this makes any sense."

"What is your third wish?"

"Will you stop nagging me about my..." he slowed down his speech and mulled over what he was saying, "... third wish. My third wish! I wish, I wish that I knew who I was."

The old hag gave a broken smile, "How amusing."

"What's amusing?"

"Well you see, that was also your first wish."

## Who's the Boss

Judson Wright

He couldn't handle it anymore. This was absurd. How could anyone possibly be expected to work under these brutal circumstances? He took a deep breath and started to walk towards her, sweat already beading down his forehead. As soon as he came within a few feet of her, she glanced up with that piercing stare, acknowledging his apparently unwelcome presence.

"What do you want?" she asked in her oh-so authoritative voice. He hated that voice.

"I..." he stopped. His mind went blank. Oh no, this can't be happening. Completely blank. "I.. ." No, no, no, this isn't fair! He knew perfectly well ahead of time exactly what he was going to say. "Ya see, I..." Come on, man, think!

"Well, get on with it, or did you just decide to come up and waste my time?"

"No, I... n-n-now look, y-you can't tell me w-w-what to do around..." he started out saying but just as quickly he halted once more. Her eyes might as well have shot out laser beams; he could already feel his soul cringing and writhing as she glared at him.

"Are we going to have a problem, you and I? I certainly hope not; I'm quite busy and although I would love to get into this with you some other time, I have to finish this report by four. Now you are going to walk away and I will pretend none of this happened." He could feel a tightening within his neck. *Gulp*. This woman had to have been sent from Hades. Her eyes were so cold yet he could still feel them burning into him. "Now you are going to walk away and I will pretend none of this happened." she reiterated impatiently, expecting him to leave.

He took a deep breath and with all of his might mustered up the courage to try to continue on. He was going to let her know who was boss, all right. He looked her right in those fiendish eyes and clearly said, "you're the boss" then turned around and traipsed back to his cubicle.



**Untitled**  
*Amber Wilson*



**Untitled**  
*Rebecca Rieber*



# **Don't Try to Put Your Folks into a Nursing Home if they have Psycho-Homicidal Tendencies**

*Judson Wright*

They never found his head. His bloated torso had washed up on Holland's Bay. Its exterior was shiny with a dull bluish tint, covered in algae. Tiny crustaceans had already burrowed themselves into cozy little niches all throughout the soft flesh, perhaps preparing for the coming winter. But his head had been cut clean off.

His arms were found deep within the woods; a hunter had come across them, smelly and in decay. Maggots reeling and squiggling within the thin lacerations of the broken skin. The actual shoulder appeared to have been ripped from the torso, not cut, albeit with quite a bit of force.

His legs had been found at the original crime scene. The killer had had some fun with him. The case report stated that one of the victim's legs had been cut off and then used to beat the victim to death.

Some of his internal organs were apparently removed before his torso went for a swim. A janitor found them slopped with some raw meat and other "assortments" in the freezer of The Viola, an upscale restaurant on 32nd and Oaks. They made the discovery about a half an hour too late however, his liver had already been served to the portly gentleman at table seventeen. Check please.

Strangely enough, they even found his neck. A few kids were playing hide-n-go-seek around the playground on a bright and sunshiny Thursday afternoon. The youngsters didn't even know what they had found. Why would it be left in a kindergarten playground? Sick bastards. But still no sign of the head. Whoever did this made sure it was a tight shave.

\* \* \*

Edina turned to her husband, "Can you believe that there are people who would do this in the world that we live in?" He mumbled under his breath, "Yeah, it's a shame."

She sipped her tea as she relaxed in her recliner, ruffling the crocheted head rest cover. "By the way, when are you going to get rid of Jonathan's decaying head in the closet? It's starting to smell."

"Will you stop badgering me, woman? I'll throw it out tomorrow. I swear, that's all you do, bicker, bicker, bicker. Oh well, is there any tea left?"

# Don Quijote Trasterrado

*(A Eulalio Ferrer, viejo amigo, quijotesco y trasterrado.)*

He aquí el reverso del tapiz. La vida  
tiene el mismo vellón en igual rueca.  
Esta es la Mancha aquélla, vasta y seca,  
aunque hoy está de flamboyán vestida.

Sangra el ocaso por la misma herida.  
Quema el cura—el chamán—mi biblioteca.  
Hoy los gigantes son de piedra olmeca.  
Ayer, de cal y de viento sin brida.

Ya no cabalgo sino en Clavileño.  
Rocinante era real, y esto es un sueño  
soñado en el fanal que el tiempo empaña.

Y aquí estoy, destiempado, en duermeverla,  
soñando con Malinche de canela,  
mi Dulcinea de la Nueva España.

# Don Quijote Out Of Place

*(To Eulalio Ferrer, an old friend, quixotic and out of place.)*

Here's the reverse of the tapestry. Life  
has the same fleece on an equal distaff.  
This is that Mancha, dry and vast,  
although today it's dressed to the nines.

The setting sun bleeds through the same wound.  
The priest—that shaman—burns my library at home.  
Today the giants are of Olmec stone.  
Yesterday, of limestone and reckless wind.

I only ride on Clavileño, my faithful steed.  
Rocinante was real, and this is a dream,  
dreamed as time dims the light on the window pane.

And here I am, out of time, half sleeping,  
Dreaming of my cinnamon Malinche,  
my Dulcinea from the New Spain.

*Gordon McNeer*

# Emotions of the Heart

*Kristen N. Thompson*

The lights are low and the candles are lit.  
You pick up your pen and cautiously try to write  
the thoughts that contaminate your mind  
from seeing the reality of the day.  
After scribbling down a line or two  
you rip the paper in half  
and start once again on the next.  
Your hand waits eagerly  
as your heart tries desperately to voice its emotions,  
but the silence is long  
and your thoughts become memories  
that you sit and ponder and wish you could forget  
and finally after starting over time and time again  
in the coziness of your secluded, little bedroom  
you simply write in bold red letters,  
"No words can ever describe the way I feel!"  
there is nothing as strong or as real  
as these emotions that fill your being.  
Nothing can express the way you feel,  
the things you've lost, or the love that lingers  
and there becomes an absolute emptiness in you  
as you try to grasp the perfect thoughts on paper  
... but, then again your pen lays gently on the table  
hoping maybe tomorrow it will get the chance to capture  
the emotions of your heart.

## Untitled

*Debbie Martin*



## **"Clarity"**

*Kimberly Augdahl*



## **"Grandpa's Leisure"**

*Kimberly Augdahl*



## **Friday Night Cookout**

*Judson Wright*

The searing flames.  
The sizzling meat.  
Burning, cooking, broiling.  
Is it a hamburger or steakburger?  
Neither.  
Tommy stuck his hand in the grill  
then accidentally turned it on...again.  
Silly boy.

## **Hitchhike**

*Amy Bailey*

There is a deepness in your eyes  
If you let fate take you by  
It will be hard to get a ride  
Selling sex to passers by

Hot desert takes you by the hand  
Sweat and leather you say "it's poetry, man"  
The snake curls to warm its skin  
You hold out your hands to let it in  
Flashing sun in painted day  
Traveler runs a thousand ways  
His love preaches to the end  
He only listens to the sand

In the heat, on the cracks  
In dry thunder with no rain  
He lives how he can  
Walks and writes in his mind  
Passages of poetry to fade in time  
In the sun  
In the desert  
Like my traveler.

## Untitled

I can feel your heart blooming in mine,  
We share a dimension of fire,  
Raging inferno, love divine,  
Your voice strums of larks and lyre.

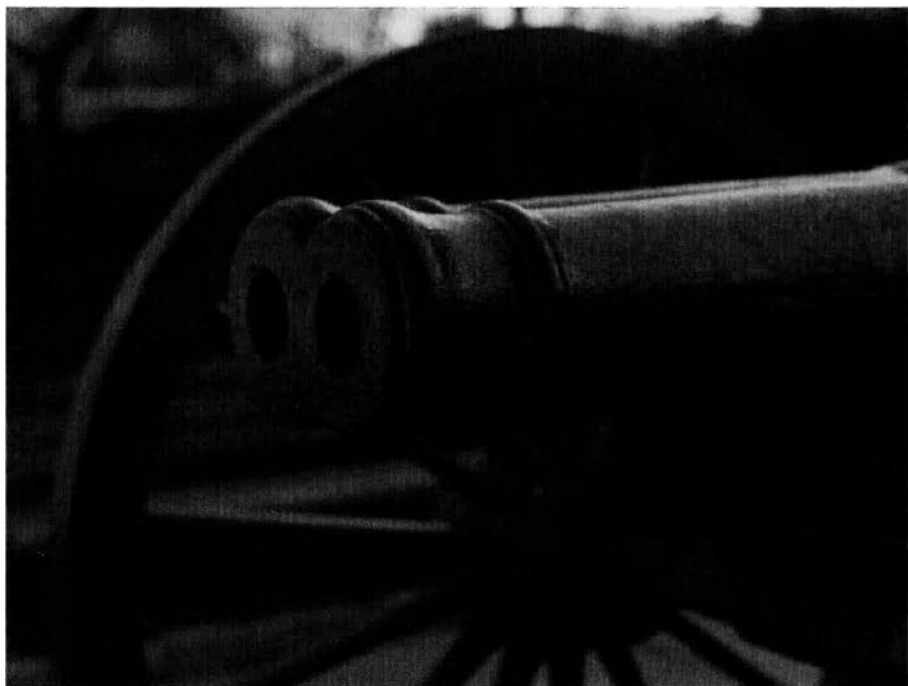
On a meadow's brook I ponder,  
In nature's silence I confide,  
My dream to enter your thoughts and wander  
And discover the treasures locked inside.

Be it mountains, or rivers, or streams I should cross,  
To prove my love so dear,  
I'd bear the Mariner's Albatross,  
Just to hold your beauty near.

I long the day to taste you again,  
And hold your beauty soft,  
Our hearts will soar o'er gentle spring rains,  
Rejoicing tears of our passion aloft.

## Untitled

*Rebecca Rieber*



## Untitled

*Billy Roper*

1.

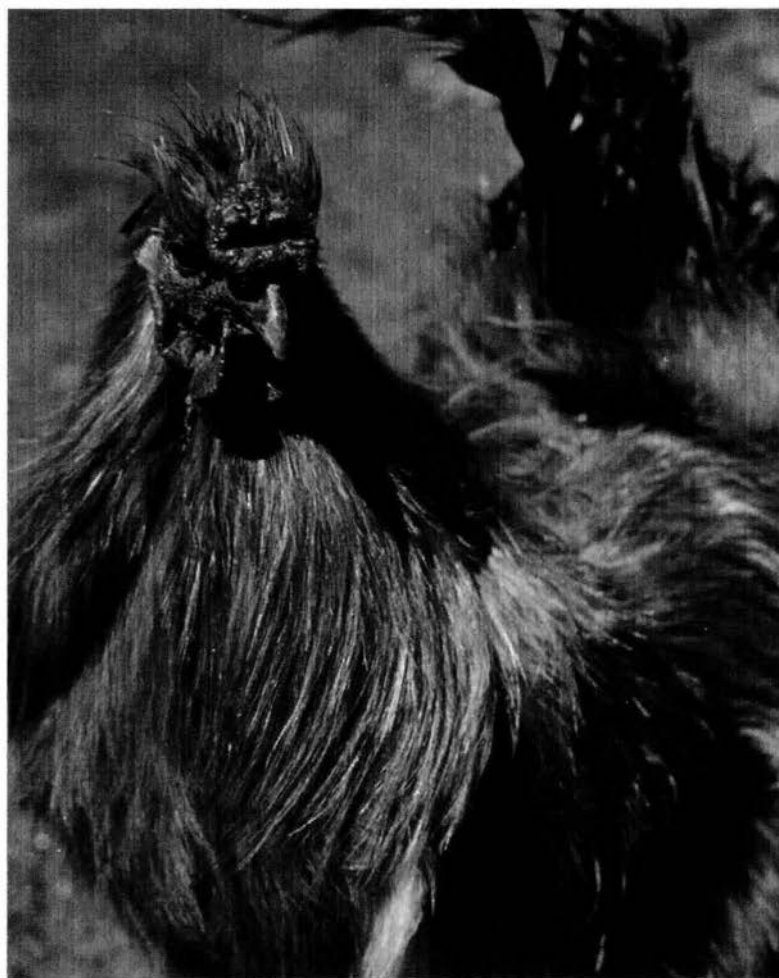
in my dreams i ride wild horses  
i fly across the sky like wind on a wheat field

2.

in my life i ride plow horses  
i move like a river always forward  
slow and fast

## Untitled

*Rebecca Rieber*





# Untitled

*Judson Wright*

Life is a but a young rose  
Burning in the fires of eternity...  
Rolling the hillsides like the plague  
The gift of death given through the gift of love.  
And where are we in this eternal cycle of filth  
and decay?  
Why we are at home, sleeping in our comfortable  
beds,  
Our stomachs full of home cooked goodness.  
We pretend that none of this impending doom  
really follows us.  
And as we dream of sugarplums, candies, toys...  
We die.

Oh, but what else do I see,  
What else do my eyes watch burn asunder due to  
the sins of this mortal world?  
I see children out in the cold,  
Hungry,  
Homeless.  
I see men and women,  
Their noses plastered to the sky,  
They notice not the poor children desperately in  
need.  
They see ruffians, and they feel for their pocket  
book so that it is not stolen.  
Yet these rich men, no matter how rich they  
might be,  
They will be buried  
Just the same as you and me.

And what of the life spent in regret,  
The script of their lives so full of mistakes.  
So full of. . . typos.  
We scorn these thespians not realizing that we  
play the equal role,  
And our grand performance goes unnoticed to  
the stars.

A comet  
Burning holes in our existence.  
Fire takes residency within my mind,

Scorching every sense that I hold dear,  
Melting, melding, my thoughts  
Wax drips from my ears.  
No wait.  
It does not.  
I die.

An obsession with death  
Have I not,  
It just seems to come up a lot.  
Not that I seek it,  
Not that I mind,  
For what else in life do I know for sure I will  
find?  
Darkness envelops me into his being,  
Consummating our life entwinement,  
Our marble cake of madness  
Our soufflé of pain and anger  
Topped with a tasty strawberry icing.  
Serves eight.

Buttery goodness  
Killed the cat.  
Much like time,  
Stretched out into limbo:  
The plane of existence.  
Not the party game.  
Yet I still fall on my back.  
Much like a turtle  
Who has fallen on his back  
And I spend my existence  
On my back  
Much like a turtle  
Spending his existence on his back.  
I die.

A prickly pear pops into view  
As it devours its young.  
Society.

Her sweet golden hair  
Flows through the wind  
I chop it off  
30 bucks a strand.

Monetary gain at the cost of spiritual salvation.  
Who needs eternity when I can have my BMW?  
Strangely so said a cat I once knew  
Who was then devoured by buttery goodness.  
Where is his salvation now?  
Asked the Pillsbury Dough Man  
With his malicious little smile.  
Poke his stomach and he'll give you a cute little  
laugh,  
For he has gorged himself on a spiritless cat.

Little demon people  
Sitting on my lap,  
Telling me about this thing called life  
And how it's full of crap.  
They fill me in on every word  
They tell me every lie,  
They reveal to me every truth  
That I must know before I die.  
At first I thought they were but shoes,  
But now I guess I was wrong,  
For as I turn to walk away...  
BLAM, BLAM, BLAM  
I die.

## Chords of Time

*Debbie Martin*



## **My Love Has Fallen Like the Autumn Leaves**

*Judson Wright*

The fallen seeds of an autumn past  
Laid claim to my heart soon thereafter.  
In the crisp winter nights, oh how I wanted to hold my love,  
And tend to her in the callous fields of cold, lifeless earth.  
Spring blossomed as a soft white carnation,  
But wilted ever so lightly near the tips.  
The leaves still grew,  
For me, they still grew.  
My love moved on,  
Tending the garden,  
Not noticing the wilting flowers.  
Soon the viney weeds started to choke out the life of the already  
dying light  
From the dull and drying petals.  
The garden disappeared.  
My love she knew not where her garden had gone,  
She barely even noticed.  
She tended the weeds instead;  
But the leaves of the trees saw my suffering,  
Watched it fall petal by petal slowly to the ground below.  
The ageless bark could not bear such sorrow,  
And so it wept along beside me.

## **Untitled**

*John David Raper*



# Negotiation of Time

*Amy Bailey*

I've never liked endings. I look helplessly through the few empty pages in the back of the book after the words have ceased, wishing for more, to get me through, for closure, for purpose, to mourn, to remember. I play songs over and over again. Not wishing for the intersection, the slight pause that will close and destroy the moment. For what do they know about the softest mood, the moment where the melody provides strings between loosely flowing ideas, strength where once there was none. And how can they end the movie with a kiss, a stare, when you get close but not close enough. How can you end a saga with only a flicker of hope?

I suppose it's art. But is it art just because it leaves us hungry? I'll never know, and if I do, I'm so fickle I'll change my mind again tomorrow.

Life doesn't disappoint me so, because we don't know where the endings are, and changing, growing, eventually, in reflection, we realize looking back on our lives just where the turning points were, and where the chapters closed for good, although we had no idea at that time. There were times, and there are times in my life where I am so UNAWARE, so out of practice of reality, (or maybe too head-strong in it) that I miss the essence of life. These are times when progress is true only in work, and not in matters of the heart or soul. Tonight as I sat in my father's chair, big enough to curl my legs up close to me in his imprint, my mind muted the television and I looked up at the fireplace and in the darkened glass cover I saw the reflection of my mother. She was in her usual place on the old navy blue couch, glasses on, bathrobe, book in hand, and fingers fidgeting, just like mine do. Her knees drawn to her chest, my mother, through the glass, the reflection I will never forget. I felt so much love. And tomorrow I leave for school. And in moments like these, it's easy to want to stay and be close to her, while a scary voice whispers into my ear, "while you still can." We all get farther and farther away from our families and the people we love, trying to get ahead in our own lives. We are trying to make them proud, do what we were raised to do, while we try to hold onto the strongest bonds, watching the weak ones crack right before our eyes. Bonds slipping through our fingers while we pull closer to what is left, so we may return when the work is done, and rebuild. Replace the bonds, old for new. And that is change, a negotiation of what we beg and strive to keep, and what we forget and lose.

**Untitled**  
*Amber Wilson*



## Untitled

Peace on earth I wish for thee  
Peace on earth I pray  
I hope you'd wish the same for me  
on this bloodiest of days  
I see your blank face in my mind  
Whenever I close my eyes  
And then your blankness takes on shape  
When tracers fill the skies

I sit behind my iron sights  
and grip my stick of death  
And know you've forfeited all your rights  
of the little life that you have left

My head is light and my hands shake  
my heart begins to pound  
I know your ground begins to quake  
When I squeeze another round

I pull my bolt I push it too  
another one in the hole  
A little present I have for you  
Now I'm ready to rock and roll

I smell your fears  
I hear your thoughts  
as the bullet goes downrange  
Oh God what am I doing here  
In this green land of the strange.

# Settling the Score

*Amy Bailey*

I sat in the darkness and watched the lines on the highway.  
There is no time but now.  
All I bought I have spent to never  
Return  
To that special place and that sacred thought.  
The knowing is what kills me.  
Thinking the same  
Moving the same  
Like remembering an ancient ritual.  
We flow together.  
Forces run together.  
And with the light you believe in,  
It's hard to leave a thought that you love,  
Like a room you could spend the rest of your life in  
I could dwell in your heart.  
Let fate not deliver me to another house,  
Where I will only linger in your mind.

There were dark lines,  
To cascade soft times,  
And there were broad rounds  
To say it is suffice to be down  
One moment where we can never go back  
Where we were, we were flying,  
Holding the chance of possibility.  
And now the lines are going, turning,  
To another day  
To where I have to return to the person I was before I left.  
Imagine never coming down  
Think of the whole world spinning around,  
Without you.  
That must be the heaven of having a chance at fate. Fated.  
Empty in the black sky  
No moon tonight for me to lift my weary eyes to.  
I am thankful for the time that's passed.  
I am satisfied, because I know,  
Somewhere there is a love  
A love of purity.  
Higher than all the "I do's" divorcees promised.  
Higher than convenient marriage.  
Paid vacations, Big tips,  
NO  
Give me another level for the score I have to settle  
With life.  
Love waits for us.



# SILLY FISH

*Fox Gradin*

fish  
glub,  
swim  
and swim  
and float in the water and  
try not to be eaten by any of the bigger fish  
in this territory you think is your own. You're in for  
it baby, because you know there is danger around every  
rock and piece of grass that you come across, don't  
you? Silly fish, you're only kidding yourself into thinking  
that you are the only fish in the sea. Everyone wants  
you for their dinner tonight, silly fish.  
so swim, glub, for  
your  
tiny  
life.

## Untitled

*Rebecca Rieber*



# **Speaking for the Mother Earth and pleading for the natural world**

*Billy Roper*

What is it I have done to you that you cut these gashes in my soul?

God is your father, but I am your mother.

Did you not come from my womb?

Is your flesh not really my soil and will it not go back?

The fluids in your body where did they come from?

Are they not from me?

when the storms tear across my face you hide like a small child.

Yet you tear out my heart to waste it, you are sad. You can not  
destroy me yet in hurting me you destroy yourself- - -you think  
you own the rainbows, do you not? And the angels are

Your slaves?

THERE ARE ENOUGH HIGHWAYS STOP IT.

# **The First Date**

*Billy Roper*

1.

your heart beats and floats like fear

as you say hello

silence is a door left open it is much safer to talk

2.

then the time to walk and sit

how close or how far away becomes everything

because passion waits in a cage like a cat

going to the vet and you both know it

3.

faces become your armor, your coverings and your lies

you are not the person you have suddenly become

yet your voice is dancing

nobody ever met a person on the first date

4.

you have rolled the windows up and down enough times it is time

to go home or somewhere

# **The Magician**

*Amy Bailey*

Infinity wreathed around your head  
Crowning insanity  
Beautiful garden  
Red robes  
White cloaks  
Hold the candles in your hand  
You never light them though you can  
Point to heaven  
Hold high to hell  
Stand 'neath inferno  
Sword stabbing darkness, age, and pain  
Read the petals in your garden  
Cups overflowing empty gold plentiful decay  
Onto the world alone  
Burn the omens drawn  
Pentacle shining for richer or poorer  
Deep dark weight  
On mankind's back  
The magician has a stack.  
Wand wave the eyes to read ambiguity  
Simplistic vengeance  
There's an evil in the garden  
Telling fortune to the stars  
In every garden  
Reading from the offerings  
Is the magician.

# **The Story Teller**

*James M. Palmer*

It is night, and cold. The group sits close together, huddled round a fire against the quickening dark, waiting for him to speak: At last, the old man lifts his withered hands to the group and begins. His voice is the sound of dead leaves being crushed underfoot, and he calls out to the group in the ancestral tongue of our language. The group leans in closer, braving the heat from the fire between them and the old man, interested in every word that wisps from his mouth like smoke. The man's dark eyes flicker in the firelight and he realizes he has them. Full of purpose now, the storyteller continues, his voice rising and falling, rising and falling. A few children are lulled asleep by it, but the adults have latched onto his lies. At the story's conclusion the members of the group nod in approval and understanding, then politely ask for another.

It went on and on like this, down through the centuries. The village storyteller was the historian of the tribe, the keeper of its morals. He was the most celebrated member of his people; the one who knew how the world began, and why the moon sometimes swallowed the sun.

We still have something of those old storytellers within us. We want to capture and move people with nothing more than words. Sitting here, clinging together in the dimness, we seek respite from the mortal dreads that tear at us all. We want to escape the world outside, to gather round the fire and be comforted. To be reminded that we are not alone; to know that, though entropy tightens its fist around us, we are all in this together. I am just like you. I laugh just like you. I get scared, just like you. In this room, we each hear the sounds of our souls.

Words are magical. They make us laugh or cry or nod with understanding at a similar situation. The word is the most powerful weapon we have. It is a broken bottle; a sword; a scalpel; a warm breeze. It forms the half-truths that will remain long after facts are forgotten. In the beginning was the word; in the end, it is all that we have left.

## title

*Judson Wright*

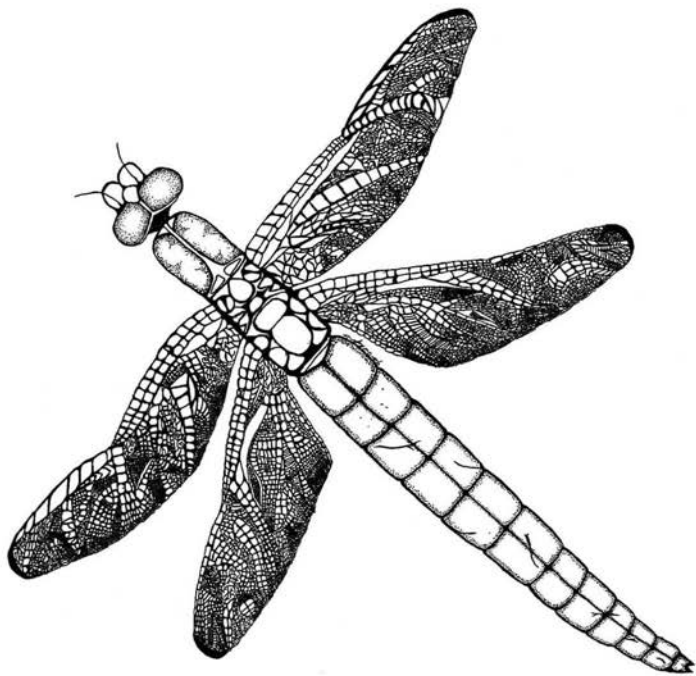
this is a poem  
it doesn't rhyme  
it has no symbolism  
the end

-signed  
the author

## Tripping on the Sidewalk

*Judson Wright*

I seem to have something stuck in my teeth,  
I think it's a little piece of beef  
Oh wait, it has a furry head,  
And four little furry legs;  
Hmmm, it's a hamster.  
Oh wait, that's not my teeth,  
It's the pet store.



# The Walking Leash

*B. J. Robinson*

Butch was settling in all right, Gene thought to himself, liking the way Butch was keeping him company. Butch was sitting curled up on his side, under the coffee table. Butch was a completely black cat so that when he stretched, curving up his back, he looked exactly like a Halloween cat. His coworkers had made fun of Gene about taking a black cat into his home. "Don't let him cross your path; otherwise, you'll have bad luck," they chaffed. "Maybe he's some witch's familiar."

Gene paid them no attention. He had promised his dear aunt, who had taken seriously ill, that he would take care of Butch. He totted off the chores, to please her. "I'll feed him twice a day and give him fresh water. And I'll clean his litter box every day."

"And you'll wash it clean every week?" she tried to sit up in her bed.

He put up a restraining hand. "Absolutely every week—with baking soda, even."

"What else?" she smiled.

At a loss, he stared at her, baffled. "I don't know. What else?"

"My goodness, Gene. Where have you been living all your twenty years? He needs a combing every day. He needs his nails clipped once a week—with small scissors, not those guillotine clip-pers that crush the nails. He needs his teeth brushed once a week. He takes vitamins with breakfast. And he must have a twenty minute walk every day."

That walk had really stumped Gene at first. But, testing the waters that first day at his aunt's before bringing Butch home with him, he found the Butch did indeed walk with a leash, really, a lead and harness—a hot pink lead that looked pretty garish against Butch's black silky coat. There was no point calling it a lead, though, since Butch went in whichever direction he chose at varying paces. He'd inch over the leaf covered ground, nosing aside leaves and blades of grass. He'd rush after a falling pine cone. Or he'd sit on his haunches staring, at what, Gene had no idea.

Gene looked forward to that twenty minute walk with Butch, every day as soon as Gene came home from work. He enjoyed listening to the crickets tune up, seeing the lowering light move among the trees, and breathing in the cooling air.

What he didn't enjoy was that walking leash. He didn't tell anyone about it, but it really bothered him. He kept it in a cardboard box by the front door, the same cardboard box that held his muddy black sneakers and red Cardinal's baseball cap. But every morning,

he found it stretched across his bedroom floor. Once it was even halfway up his bed. Some evenings, after waking up from a doze on his easy chair, he'd find it zigzagged on the floor beside him. When he came home from work, he always had to look for it. It would be caught around the kitchen chair leg or sliding up the hall. Butch, though, would always be in the same place, on the easy chair, licking his paw.

Some nights, hovering between sleep and waking, Gene heard a jangle then a thump-thump. And sure enough, the walking leash would be there in his bedroom in the morning. Once he almost caught it as it turned the corner from the hall into the living room, just disappearing from his sight. But when he picked it up, it hung lifeless in his hands. And Butch was in his usual place, on the easy chair, scratching his ear.

It was uncanny. But as much as it bothered him, Gene would still harness up Butch for the daily walk they both completely enjoyed.

Moral of the story: Cats can't walk by themselves.



## True Love

Judson Wright

She was his only reason for breathing. When he woke up in the morning, he woke up for her. When he brushed his teeth it was for her. When he went to work, it was for her. When he put the barrel of the gun to his mouth, it was for her; but when he pulled the trigger, that was for him.

They say your life flashes before you in those last few seconds of numbed consciousness. He wasn't sure if this is what "they" meant. He saw himself sitting outside of a familiar street corner at a familiar coffee shop on an oh-so-familiar day. He was reading about a string of murders and a possible serial killer on the loose. Tragic. He went to turn the page. "Watch your coffee" he thought as he watched himself spill it all over her beautiful turquoise dress. She jumped back in surprise, but then she realized what had just occurred. She was not merciful. Maybe that's what he liked about her, what had drawn him to her first. She definitely had spunk. He remembered thinking to himself, "Now this is the type of girl for me."

Suddenly he was "pulled" to another road, another part of town. The moonlight beamed down over his head, casting a light shadow over his past self. He strangely knew where he was. It had been a lovely evening for the both of them. He took her out to dinner then they had a long stroll through the park. He would always remember that as the happiest night of his life. She was the one for him; he just knew it.

Once more he was jerked away and appeared someplace new. A small flower shop sat pleasantly on the corner of 5th and Reynolds. It was a quaint little place run by an old friend. Oh, what was his name? Jacob Greys, yeah, that's it. He had purchased countless bouquets from Greys just for her. Just like all the other presents. like the candies and the jewelry: they were all bought for her. She was the one for him. Always.

He felt that same pull as if he were going to reappear somewhere new, but this time he didn't go anywhere. There stood the same quaint little flower shop at 5th and Reynolds, yet something felt different. He didn't see anything going on, nor did he see himself, so he decided to wander a bit. As he looked around the side of the building, he caught a glimpse of Jacob Greys. It wasn't pretty. He turned his head to look away only to see the rest of Jacob Greys. Jacob Greys had commented one day that he didn't particularly like the colour turquoise. Something just had to be done about that. How dare he talk about her like that. She loved that dress. He hadn't meant to spill coffee on her. How dare Jacob Greys. Yes, something just had to be done about that. She *was* the one for him. Always.

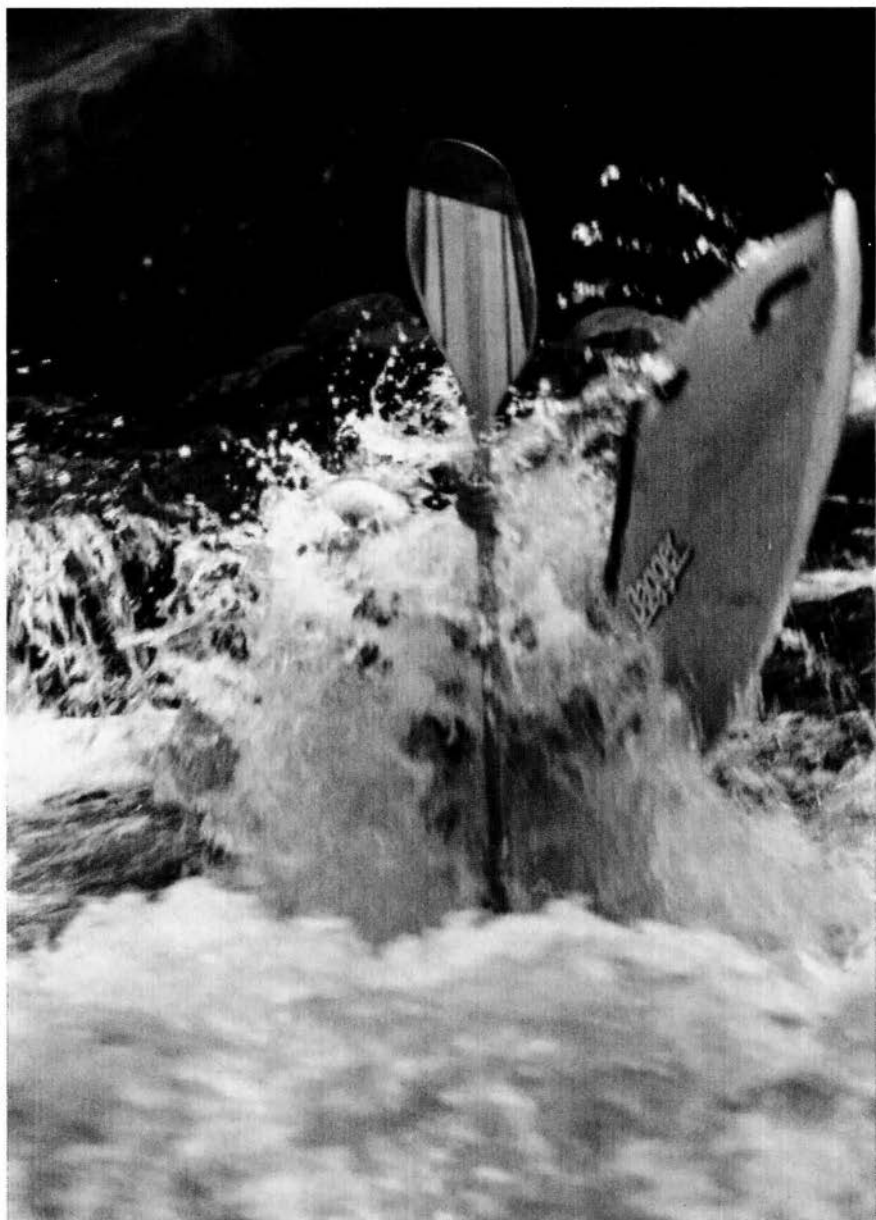
And again he was pulled away. He stood in front of a dark alley next to a crowded street. A small child in a yellow rain parka skipped merrily down the sidewalk. Only a few yards into the alley, a young woman lay still on the cracked pavement. She looked all too familiar. He ran to her, remembering how much he loved her. But what was this? It wasn't her. None of them were. Deceivers. He had made sure that no one would ever make that mistake again. This person was *not* her. She was the one for him. Always.

Within a blink of an eye, he was back outside her apartment after the happiest day of his life. Why was he back here? He saw himself still standing there, staring at the building. A light came on from the second story. Her room. One of the curtains opened briefly, revealing her beautiful hazel eyes. The curtain quickly closed and through the silhouette of the light on the curtain it looked as though she was coming down! He could barely contain his love. He so wanted to see her again. She opened the door and he watched himself run to embrace her but she started screaming at him. But why? She had something in her hand too. A knife? Why would she be holding a silly thing like that? What was this she was screaming about "leave me alone?" He knew that's not what she wanted. After all, she was the one for him. Always. He just needed to remind her. And he did.

He was thinking about how much she liked flowers. Looking up from her intestines, he smiled. He was now sitting in his room, holding her hand, kissing her cheek; that's all he could fit into his folded up shirt. And those beautiful hazel eyes. He loved her so much. He watched himself as he giggled wildly about how jealous everyone must be of their love. A love like this only comes once in a lifetime, and you have to catch it before it slips out of your fingers. He squeezed her hand tightly. How could anyone be as lucky as him? He watched as he extended a small handgun to his mouth. She was the only one for him. He watched as he pulled the trigger. Yes, she was the only one for him. Always.

# Untitled

*John David Raper*



# **Ubuloquatic Twinkie-induced Hyperpondernicities**

*Judson Wright*

He was as ubuloquatic as the next man,  
Or so I've heard it said,  
But when he pulled out a twinkie  
And blew away his head,  
I really had to wonder  
How ubuloquacious he could be  
So then I took a twinkie  
And smooshed it on my knee.

But as I looked at that creamy mess  
Plastered against my knee,  
I slowly gained the urge to write  
A single letter: D  
So I wrote.  
D.  
And I thought,  
D.  
So then I took another twinkie  
And smooshed it on my knee,  
"Oh," I thought,  
"How ubuloquatic of me!"

I've traveled throughout this great big world,  
With a "twinkie" on my knee,  
And never have I questioned how it got there,  
Because I know it was me.  
But others may wonder,  
Others may say...  
Well, I don't know what they'd say,  
But still!  
I'd say I'm as ubuloquatic as the next man,  
Then ruin the rhyme scheme by putting a twinkie to my head and  
pulling the trigger...

# Untitled

*John David Raper*



